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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (UNAVEM III)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 1098 (1997) of 27 February 1997, in which the Council, inter alia, urged the Government of Angola and, in particular, the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) to establish without delay the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, and requested me to report by 20 March 1997 on the status of the formation of that Government.

II. STATUS OF THE FORMATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

2. My report to the Security Council of 7 February 1997 (S/1997/115) described the strenuous efforts undertaken by my Special Representative, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, with the support of the representatives of the three observer States (Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America), to encourage the Government and UNITA to establish the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation earlier this year, in accordance with the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex) and subsequent agreements between the two parties. Regrettably, those attempts were unsuccessful and the Security Council therefore decided to call on the parties to implement their agreements strictly and to form the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation without linkages or further delay.

3. Following the adoption, on 27 February, of Security Council resolution 1098 (1997), the Government of Angola proposed to establish 20 March 1997 as the date for the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. It also suggested that the UNITA deputies in the National Assembly and UNITA officials designated to take up posts in the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation arrive in Luanda well in advance of that date. This matter was the subject of intense consultations between the parties and in the Joint Commission. While agreeing in principle to the early arrival of its representatives, UNITA expressed the view that no specific date should be

determined and announced regarding the arrival of its deputies and officials in the capital. At the same time, UNITA indicated that its President, Mr. Jonas Savimbi, would make an important announcement during the ceremonies marking the thirty-first anniversary of the establishment of UNITA on 13 March.

4. At a meeting with my Special Representative on 7 March 1997, the President of the Republic of Angola, Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, agreed that the date for the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation would be determined after the arrival in Luanda of the UNITA deputies and officials. In the meantime, UNITA continued to insist that, before a new Government was formed, the two parties should discuss its programme. In that connection, on 3 March the Government of Angola presented to UNITA a draft programme to be submitted for the consideration of the Council of Ministers after the formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. It also stated that the document had taken into account the views expressed in the draft programme circulated by UNITA on 11 February.

5. In a statement made at the celebration of the UNITA anniversary on 13 March, Mr. Savimbi reiterated his party's willingness to participate in the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. At the same time, he again raised the need for an agreed minimum programme for the new Government before its establishment. UNITA confirmed that it would send all its representatives to Luanda between 15 and 17 March. However, it was only on the evening of 17 March that some deputies started to arrive in the Angolan capital. As at 19 March, there were 43 UNITA deputies in Luanda (of a total of 70), some of whom had already been there since February 1997. Seven officials designated to take up posts in the new Government had also arrived in Luanda by that date, out of a total of 11. It is expected that, after the arrival of all UNITA designated officials, the Government will set the date for the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation and that this will be endorsed by the Joint Commission.

6. In an attempt to expedite the formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, my Special Representative travelled to Bailundo on 18 March for consultations with Mr. Savimbi. The UNITA leader complained at what he described as attempts by the Government to delay the start of a dialogue between the two parties on a joint programme. He stressed, however, that the problem of the formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation could be resolved if a genuine spirit of national reconciliation prevailed. There are indications that the Government is prepared to begin discussion of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation programme without delay, but for this to happen, all UNITA officials should be present in the Angolan capital. My Special Representative reports that intensive consultations on this issue are continuing, and he has presented to the parties additional proposals with a view to resolving the issue within the next few days.

III. OBSERVATIONS

7. I find it regrettable that, despite determined and intensive efforts, the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation has not yet been established. It is a matter of very serious concern that its formation has again been

postponed, owing primarily to the failure of UNITA to send all its officials to Luanda as previously agreed. The repeated delays in the fulfilment of this obligation are having a negative impact on the implementation of major aspects of the peace process, including the normalization of State administration throughout Angola and the demobilization of excess UNITA personnel, who continue to be cantoned in selection and demobilization centres. This situation is seriously undermining the credibility of the peace process and should not be allowed to continue.

8. I realize that the patience of the international community is wearing thin. It is in this spirit that I have decided to visit Angola from 22 to 25 March 1997 with the intention of making a first-hand assessment of the situation and impressing upon the parties the need to establish the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation without any further delay. During my visit to the region, I shall also consult my Special Representative, the representatives of the observer States and other Governments concerned on ways and means of injecting new vigour into the peace process.